

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03 DODE-00 MCE-00
/073 W

-----003713 271346Z /50

R 271106Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8267

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0967

DAKAR FOR DATT

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PEPR, AG, MO, MR, FR, SP

SUBJ: MOROCCAN ARMS REQUEST

REF: STATE 72238 (NOTAL)

1. CHARGE CALLED ON MFA DIRECTOR WESTERN EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS AMINE KHERBI MARCH 26 TO CONVEY POINTS MADE IN PARA 2 REFTEL. KHERBI REACTED STRONGLY TO WORDING OF POINTS ALLEGING THIS WAS CHANGE IN U.S. POSITION AS GIVEN PREVIOUSLY BY U.S. OFFICIALS INCLUDING NEA/AFN DIRECTOR BISHOP, THE AMBASSADOR AND CHARGE VARIOUSLY TO POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR GENERAL BOUSSELHAM, MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL SBIH AND KHERBI HIMSELF. HE FELT U.S. SHOULD NOW CLARIFY ITS POSITION OF NEUTRALITY NOW THAT WE WERE INCRIMINATING ALGERIA DIRECTLY AND UNJUSTLY. KHERBI SAID IT WAS IN FACT THE "NEIGHBORS" THEMSELVES WHO WERE INVADING THE WESTERN SAHARA.

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HE SAID WE WERE FALSELY INSINUATING AND THAT THIS DID NOT LOOK TO HIM LIKE NEUTRALITY. HE ASSERTED THAT THE WESTERN SAHARA WAS TERRITORY OCCUPIED BY FORCE BY MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA IN A MANNER CONTRARY TO ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE AND CONTRARY TO THE UN RESOLUTION ON THE ISSUE. HE REGRETTED "THAT THE U.S. INTERPRETED ERRONEOUSLY THE LEGITIMATE ATTEMPT BY THE SAHARAN PEOPLE TO ASSERT THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION."

IF PEACE WAS MENACED, HE SAID, IT WAS NOT BECAUSE OF THE LEGITIMATE DEFENSE OF THE SAHARAN PEOPLE OF THEIR RIGHTS BUT RATHER BECAUSE OF THE GENOCIDE PERPETRATED BY MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. HE SAID HE SAW CHARGE'S PRESENTATION AS A NEW PRESSURE APPLIED TO ALGERIA AND HE ASKED CLARIFICATION OF "THIS NEW MANNER OF CHARACTERIZING THE SITUATION IN THE WESTERN SAHARA; THIS UNREAL INTERPRETATION." HE ASSERTED THAT HE SAW THE PRESENTATION AS A NEGATIVE ELEMENT IN THE SEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM. "THIS DOES NOT REASSURE US",... HE SAID; "WE ASK IF THE UNITED STATES REALLY WANTS PEACE IN THE REGION... THE U.S. CANNOT SPEAK OF NEUTRALITY IF IT CONTINUES TO ARM MOROCCO."

2. CHARGE HANDED AIDE MEMOIRE TO KHERBI DURING COURSE OF CONVERSATION. KHERBI REMARKED THAT HE FOUND DOCUMENT SUPERFLUOUS AND UNACCEPTABLE.

3. IN AMICABLE GIVE AND TAKE FOLLOWING KHERBI'S INITIAL STRONG REACTION, CHARGE EMPHASIZED THAT PRESENTATION OF POINTS REPRESENTED NOTHING NEW REGARDING U.S. POSITION; THAT FACTS OF CASE WERE CLEAR: ALGERIAN PROVISION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO POLISARIO AND POLISARIO ATTACKS AGAINST MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO. CHARGE NOTED THAT PERHAPS NO U.S. OFFICIAL HAD DESCRIBED SITUATION IN WESTERN SAHARA IN THOSE TERMS BEFORE BUT SAID THAT DID NOT CHANGE FACTS. CHARGE SAID PURPOSE OF OUR MAKING POINTS TO GOA WAS TO BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION NOT TO SELL ARMS AT THIS TIME TO MOROCCO FOR USE IN WESTERN SAHARA
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AND MAURITANIA WOULD NOT BE MISINTERPRETED BY ANYONE AS A CHANGE EITHER IN OUR POSITION OF STRICT NEUTRALITY OR IN OUR ADVOCACY OF AND STRONG DESIRE FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS SHARED DEPARTMENT'S CONCERN THAT ALGERIANS MIGHT MISINTERPRET NEGATIVE DECISION ON MOROCCO'S REQUEST FOR ARMS (PARA 1 REFTEL). FOR THIS REASON AMBASSADOR STRESSED TO PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR SMAIL HAMDANI PRIOR TO AMBASSADOR'S DEPARTURE ON LEAVE 14 MARCH THAT NEGATIVE DECISION CHANGED IN NO WAY OUR NEUTRAL STANCE ON THE SAHARA ISSUE AND HAD NO BEARING ON OUR TRADITIONAL MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO. OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS ALSO HAVE MADE THESE POINTS IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH ALGERIAN OFFICIALS.

5. KHERBI'S AGITATION AT PRESENTATION WAS IN CONTRAST TO UNCOMMUNICATIVENESS WITH WHICH HE NORMALLY RECEIVES OUR DEMARCHES.
STEPHAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, POLICIES, MILITARY PROCUREMENT, AIDE MEMOIRE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ALGIER00967
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780132-0964
Format: TEL
From: ALGIERS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780323/aaaaatns.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 02c912bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 72238
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3199550
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOROCCAN ARMS REQUEST
TAGS: MASS, PEPR, AG, MO, MR, FR, SP, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/02c912bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014